

Message Text

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S E C R E T USNATO 04272

FOR EUR/RPM

E.O.11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: NATO, XM
SUBJECT: NATO EXPERTS REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN LATIN
AMERICA

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REF: USNATO A-93; APRIL 20, 1978

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1. THIS MESSAGE TRANSMITS DRAFT TALKING POINTS FOR THE
AMBASSADOR'S USE AT THE MAY 3 NAC REVIEW OF THE NATO
EXPERTS REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN LATIN AMERICA (REFAIR).
ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON REACTION TO PROPOSED TALKING
POINTS BY MAY 2.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

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--THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT FOR UNITED
STATES RELATIONS WITH OUR HEMISPHERE NEIGHBORS. US
INTEREST IN THE AREA WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE VISITS OF
PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE, NOTED AT THE OUTSET
OF THE REPORT.

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--THE PRESIDENT'S MAJOR SPEECH TO THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS
OUTLINED THE CONTINUING US COMMITMENT TO COOPERATIVE
EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC PROGRESS. THE PRESIDENT'S

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TALKS IN BRAZIL PROBED POLICY DIFFERENCES AND AT THE
SAME TIME REAFFIRMED AND HIGHLIGHTED THE FUNDAMENTAL TIES
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES;

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--THE APPROVAL OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES BY THE SENATE
MARKS A NEW STAGE IN US RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF
PANAMA. WE BELIEVE THAT, WORKING TOGETHER, THE TWO NATIONS

CAN MAKE THE CANAL AN EXAMPLE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

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--SENATE CONSENT TO RATIFICATION WAS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE BUT, TO MY MIND, IT ILLUSTRATES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARED TO WORK HARD DOMESTICALLY TO ACHIEVE IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY GOALS. ONLY A MINORITY OF THE US PUBLIC ACTIVELY FAVORED THE TREATIES AT THE OUTSET, AND, AS YOU KNOW, OPPONENTS WERE UNCOMMONLY VOCAL IN THEIR OPPOSITION.

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--THE EXPERTS HAVE CONCLUDED ONCE AGAIN THAT SOME SLOW HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS HAS BEEN RECORDED BUT THAT THE OVERALL PICTURE REMAINS GLOOMY. FOR ITS PART THE US IS DETERMINED TO WORK FOR CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES IN LATIN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE.

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--WITH REGARD TO THE DISCUSSION IN PARAS 30 AND 31 ON CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, WE WOULD NOTE THAT THE OVERALL FIGURE OF CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL ON THE CONTINENT IS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED AT 38,000-39,000, INCLUDING ADVISORY AND COMBAT PERSONNEL. THE US HAS MADE CLEAR ITS CONCERN ABOUT CUBAN INVOLVEMENT, WHICH COMPLICATES LOCAL CONFLICTS AND LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN FOR NEW FORMS OF FOREIGN DOMINATION. BUT CASTRO CLEARLY BELIEVES THE POLITICAL GAINS OUTWEIGH THE COST AND HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPLOIT SELECTIVELY OTHER OPENINGS FOR EXPANDING CUBAN INFLUENCE IN AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD.

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--FINALLY, WITH REGARD TO PARA 26'S COMMENT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USSR AND LATIN AMERICA, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD WATCH RELATIONS BETWEEN ALL COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND LATIN AMERICA. THERE ARE AT PRESENT 105 COMMUNIST COUNTRY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE REGION. THREE NEW ONES WERE ESTABLISHED IN 1977, INCLUDING THE PRC IN SURINAM, NORTH KOREA IN GUYANA AND THE SOVIET UNION IN JAMAICA. END TEXT. BENNETT

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